

Teachers' views on students' experiences of community involvement and citizenship education

Abstract

Based upon the findings of a national survey of school coordinators and leaders on citizenship and community cohesion, this research indicates that teachers perceive their students to feel a sense of belonging to multiple communities, each with their own required actions for effective participation. There appears to be wide variation in the characteristics of students' engagement in community activities depending on their individual needs and circumstances. Whilst there is convincing evidence of schools successfully implementing strategies to equip students with a conceptual understanding of their roles as citizens, the research also identifies a need to develop students' practical skills and self-efficacy to interact with their immediate and wider communities. In order to support students to participate most effectively in their communities, there is a need for schools to provide tailored support to those groups of students who may otherwise be least likely to participate in community activities.

Keywords: Community cohesion, citizenship education, schools and communities

19 **Introduction**

20 A changing society must reflect on the emphasis for, and meaning of, rights and
21 responsibilities for those who belong formally and in other ways to ‘majority’ and ‘minority’
22 groups. Nation states can be “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) and this applies to
23 local and global contexts where particular interest, norm related or friendship groups may
24 exist. Actions in - and for - communities may take place in different ways and for varying
25 purposes (Johnson and Morris, 2010). In such a context, we need to identify what we know
26 about some of the key dimensions of citizenship and community engagement.

27 Schools have been widely urged by politicians, the media and others to ensure that students
28 recognize the value of community cohesion and citizenship (Cameron, 2010; Crick, 1998;
29 Citizenship Foundation, n.d.; DfCFS, 2007). As such, the responsibility often falls on schools
30 to facilitate higher levels of student community engagement and citizenship. The purpose of
31 this research was to determine the ways in which schools are developing, promoting, and
32 facilitating community engagement and citizenship education. Furthermore, in order to
33 ascertain teachers’ views about their students’ familiarity and connection with different
34 types of community, and more fundamentally students’ definitions and characterisations of
35 community, respondents were asked to comment on students’ sense of belonging to a
36 range of community domains (e.g., their school or neighbourhood).

37 The results reported here are based on an online school survey that was part of a much
38 larger research project titled Creating Citizenship Communities and funded by a grant from
39 the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The project aimed to identify current thinking and practice
40 in schools, explore young people’s perceptions and experiences and, through the
41 development of a focussed impact strategy, encourage partnerships to be established

between professionals and others. In addition to the school survey, the larger research project involved a review of literature on citizenship and community engagement, secondary data analysis, and multiple student focus groups fieldwork across eight schools in England. As previously indicated, the results reported here pertain to (1) teachers' views of their student's perceptions of community (2) the extent of students' engagement in community activities and (3) reports of the schools' approaches and strategies for engaging students in community activities and citizenship education.

Background

While generalisations about young people should be avoided (Cusworth et al., 2009), young people seem positive about engagement (Haste, 2005) and involve themselves in volunteering activities (Davies, et al., 2006; Gaskin, 2004; Pye et al., 2009; Roker et al., 1999). Morrow (1994) emphasises regular home and other responsibilities (e.g. minding siblings, helping with the family business). It has been found that young people play vital roles in many immigrant families especially in the role of translator (Becker, Dearden, and Aldridge, 2001; Orellana, Dorner and Pulido, 2003). It should be noted that involvement in charities, sports and single-issue campaigns might be more common than some other activities such as formal civic participation (Norris, 2002; Print, 2007; Whitting, 2003). It is important to recognise that different forms of citizenship expressed through new media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook etc.) challenge our traditional notions of linear, formal, physical engagement in favour of virtual involvement (Bennett, 2008).

Research has indicated that urban youth from deprived neighbourhoods contribute to - and have a detailed and highly specialized knowledge of - their local communities (Alexander, 2008). However, some research has suggested that those from lower socio-economic

65 backgrounds may be less likely to act civically (Darton et al., 2003; Kahne, 2008) and that
66 women tend to volunteer more than men do (Gaskin, 2004). While some young people are
67 engaging in their communities, it is important to understand what motivates them and what
68 barriers those who exhibit lower levels of engagement and citizenship may face. The
69 national young volunteers service, 'V' (2007) suggests that many young people feel there
70 are barriers to community action. A significant disjunction between their own and
71 legitimated characterizations leads to deliberate disengagement (Boyle, 2000; Bessant,
72 2004; National Audit Office, 2005). Letki (2008) argues that social deprivation (not diversity)
73 reduces engagement. In addition, social capital (or its absence) is also a significant factor in
74 predicting engagement and participation (e.g. Buxton, 2010; Jansen et al., 2006). People
75 may engage due to altruism; "membership attachment" (Cremin et al., 2009); preferences
76 for civic action; and entrepreneurial approaches that target skills and future opportunities.
77 Whitely (2005) suggest that participation can be successfully encouraged and that families,
78 schools, and social networks may be important in this process (IVR, 2004; ODPM, 2005).
79 Keating et al. (2009) argue for an inclusive ethos, welcoming physical environment and a
80 willingness to deal realistically and honestly with issues. Financial support (Pye et al., 2009)
81 and publicity (Andrews et al, 2006) may encourage engagement and participation. Davies et
82 al., (2009) recommend interpersonal skills; targeting key decision makers to gather support;
83 acting carefully about controversial issues; maintaining realistic commitments; and focusing
84 on catalysts for change. Cremin et al. (2009) highlight the role of peer support indicating
85 that "there is no clear consensus ... on incentives for volunteering, although most agree
86 that getting training, awards, and working with friends would encourage more volunteering"
87 (IVR, 2004: p.v).

Citizenship education focuses on the curriculum, school context and relationships with the community (Keating et al., 2009). Schools are variously described as ‘progressing’ (i.e., wide ranging actions); ‘focused’ (i.e., curriculum driven); ‘implicit’ (i.e., extracurricular); and ‘minimalist’ (i.e. early stage). Didactic teaching is supplemented by discussion about topical issues; developing skills (Ross, 2007); exploring concepts; leadership opportunities (Dempster and Lizzo, 2007); and action in the community (McLellan and Youniss, 2003). The evidence about the impact of citizenship education generally and specifically in relation to the link with community has been variable. It has been noted by OFSTED (2010), for example, that good links do not always exist between schools and communities. However, the emphasis by government inspectors, NGOs and researchers on the relationship between citizenship and community continues. There are some very positive comments about citizenship education in relation to communities in the most recent Ofsted overview of developments in citizenship education (OFSTED, 2013). For example, primary head teachers considered citizenship education key in promoting a sense of community within their schools (p. 5). Furthermore, the association for Citizenship Teaching continues to promote community involvement as a form of citizenship education.

Whiteley (2012) has suggested on the basis of reviewing longitudinal data on citizenship education in schools in England that there is demonstrable impact on engagement. The revised National Curriculum for citizenship to come into effect in September 2014 continues to emphasise community. For example, 14-16 year olds are being required to understand “the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity” (para. 4, “Key Stage 4”)

111

112 In conclusion, 'Community' and 'citizenship' are arenas for debating political and social
113 preferences. Some situations discourage engagement. However, many young people are
114 engaged and it is possible to increase levels of participation. Schools can promote
115 citizenship education and community engagement. Our understandings, however, of young
116 people's characterisations of a coherent community citizenship are not clear. In addition, we
117 appear to lack well-established educational practices¹. Therefore, the results presented
118 here and the larger Creating Citizenship Communities project was an attempt to fill some of
119 our gaps in knowledge.

120 **Methods**

121 A letter was sent via mail to 800 secondary schools in England inviting them to complete an
122 online survey. All follow up communications were sent via email. The schools included in the
123 sample were stratified by urbancity (urban/suburban/rural), ethnicity, and the schools'
124 position within the index of multiple deprivation. The target respondents for the
125 questionnaire were members of staff with responsibility for community cohesion and/or
126 citizenship within their school². A total of 132 teachers participated in the online survey,
127 from 119 schools. While the overall response rate was low, the responses received were
128 largely representative of the national population of schools in relation to each of the school
129 background criteria (i.e., urbancity, deprivation, and ethnic composition).

¹ For fuller review of the relevant literature please see Davies et al (2013).

² To view the questionnaire, please see Appendix B of Jeffes et al (2012) at
<http://www.york.ac.uk/media/educationalstudies/documents/research/cresj/Creating%20Citizenship%20Communities%20Survey%20Report%20February%202012.pdf>

The majority of teachers (71 per cent) who responded to the survey had responsibility for the curriculum in relation to citizenship and community and almost three-quarters (74 per cent) had responsibilities for citizenship education. Almost half of respondents (47 per cent) had strategic responsibilities for citizenship and community, and/or responsibilities for school-wide planning. Almost one-quarter (23 per cent) were members of their school's senior management team. A small number of respondents (four per cent) were teachers without responsibilities for citizenship education, and a further three per cent were non-teaching staff.

The results present below are representative of the teachers who responded on behalf of their schools. We present simple summary statistics (i.e., percentages). Therefore, there are limitations to how representative the results are in terms of other schools that did not respond or those schools that were not part of the original sample. However, it should be noted that the extensive nature of the questionnaire and the full responses that were received from teachers in 119 schools, allows us to draw some important conclusions concerning teachers views on students' experiences of community involvement and citizenship education.

Results

Defining the characteristics of students' community engagement

In order to ascertain teachers' views about their students' familiarity and connection with different types of community, and more fundamentally students' definitions and characterisations of community, participants were asked to comment on students' sense of belonging to a range of community domains (for example, their school or neighbourhood).

The findings suggest that teachers believe their students feel the greatest sense of belonging to their immediate communities. Whilst the majority report that all or most of their students feel they belong to the school and local communities, they had a weaker sense of belonging to national, European and international communities. Specifically, over three-fifths (61 per cent) report that 'all' students, and a further 36 per cent report that 'most' students feel they belong to their school community. Just over one-third (35 per cent) report that 'all' students feel they belong to the local community where they live, and a further 54 per cent report that this is felt by 'most' students. Almost one-quarter (23 per cent) report that that 'all' their students feel they belong to a national community, and a further 43 per cent report that this is felt by 'most' students. Just eight per cent of teachers report that 'all' their students belong to an international/global community. However, almost one-quarter (24 per cent) report that this felt by 'most' of their students. A further 60 per cent report that this was felt by 'some' students. Whilst almost two-thirds (66 per cent) of teachers report that 'some' of their students feel they belong to a European community, 13 per cent of teachers report that 'none' of their students feel this is the case. This indicates that students may feel a stronger sense of belonging to the international/global community than the European community.

It is interesting to note that teachers' perceptions of the strength of students' sense of belonging to particular community domains appear to reflect their views about the efficacy of their schools' strategies for contributing to community cohesion and citizenship. For example, just over two-thirds of teachers (68 per cent) report that their school is 'effective' or 'highly effective' in contributing to community cohesion and citizenship within the community in which it is located (with 19 per cent reporting that their school is 'highly

effective'). By contrast, whilst just over half (52 per cent) of teachers report that their school is 'effective' or 'highly effective' in contributing to the cohesiveness of the wider community through developing students' understanding of the UK community a further 45 per cent report that their school is only 'moderately effective'. Similarly, half of teachers (50 per cent) report that their school is 'effective' or 'highly effective' in contributing to the cohesiveness of the wider community through Europe and globally, a further 42 per cent report that their school is only 'moderately effective' and four per cent that it is 'not effective'. This suggests that as communities become increasingly removed from students' school location, strength of opinion and effectiveness of community cohesion strategies appear to diminish.

The survey also asked teachers to comment on their students' sense of belonging to a range of community groups. The findings suggest that students are more likely to feel a sense of belonging to a community based around their hobbies and leisure interests than their social and cultural backgrounds. For example, although only a small number of teachers (three per cent) report that 'all' teachers feel a sense of belonging to clubs and societies (e.g. Scouts, Science Clubs), a further two-fifths (40 per cent) report that 'most' and 56 per cent that 'some' students feel that this is the case. To a considerably lesser extent, teachers report that 'most' or 'all' of their students feel a sense of belonging to an ethnically defined community with its own strong identity, and to faith-based communities (21 per cent and 23 per cent report that this is the case respectively, with six per cent and two per cent reporting that this is felt by 'all' students). Just one per cent report that 'all' students feel a sense of belonging to a specific socio-economic group, and one-fifth (20 per cent) report that this is felt by 'most' students. However, a further 59 per cent report that this is felt by

198 'some' students. Teachers report least strongly that students feel they belong to political or
199 interest groups: none of the teachers report that 'all' of the students in their school feel that
200 this is the case, and just three per cent feel that 'most' do (although three-quarters (75 per
201 cent) report that this is felt by 'some' students).

202 These findings indicate that students simultaneously feel a sense of belonging to a range of
203 community domains and groups, suggesting that they occupy multiple community
204 identities. Whilst in general, teachers do not perceive the characteristics of their students
205 (for example, their religious beliefs, ethnicity and socio-economic status) to be a
206 contributing factor to their engagement in citizenship and community activities *within*
207 *school*, this is perhaps because school can be understood as a community shared by all
208 students. Others, however, are more dependent on the students' own interests and self-
209 efficacy to participate (for instance, political interest groups). Indeed, the findings (from
210 teachers' point of view) indicate that those students that are high achieving and those that
211 are socially confident are more likely than their peers to do voluntary work or take part in
212 community activities.

213 By contrast, according to teachers' accounts, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are
214 less likely than their peers to do so. Around a quarter of teachers report that students'
215 living in a deprived neighbourhood and the socio-economic status of students' families are
216 barriers to their engagement (24 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively). Whilst the reasons
217 for this are likely to be multifarious, this leads us to understand that different students
218 interact with their communities in different ways. Equally, students may interpret the
219 actions required to feel such a sense of belonging to vary between community types. For
220 example, a student may feel that belonging to the European community requires

221 engagement of a different nature to belonging to a club or society. As such, the
222 effectiveness of support offered by schools is likely to be greatly affected by: the varying
223 characteristics and needs of their students; the community domain or group in question;
224 and students' perceptions and understanding of what is required to interact effectively with
225 these communities.

226 *What are the characteristics of schools' approaches to citizenship and community*
227 *engagement?*

228 Teachers report that their schools are highly active in promoting citizenship education and
229 community cohesion and use a wide variety of strategies to encourage their students to
230 understand and become more involved in society. Schools appear to attach high priority to
231 citizenship and community engagement, demonstrated by the inclusion of specific
232 objectives and targets on citizenship education and/or working with the community in their
233 school mission statements and development plans. This is reported by 78 per cent and 87
234 per cent of teachers, respectively. However, teachers less commonly report that their
235 schools have specific objectives or targets which *link* citizenship with the community. Just
236 under two-fifths (39 per cent) of those who indicate that their school has specific objectives
237 or targets around citizenship and/or working with the community report that this is the
238 case.

239 Schools' approaches to citizenship and community engagement are characterised by a wide
240 range of activities, with the most common approaches focusing on fostering students'
241 understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens. For example, this includes:

- developing students' sense of social responsibility: 98 per cent report this 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent', with almost three-quarters (73 per cent) reporting it 'to a great extent'
- respecting and celebrating diversity: again, 98 per cent report this 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent', with over two-thirds (69 per cent) reporting this 'to a great extent'
- developing students' knowledge and understanding of their individual rights as citizens: 95 per cent report this 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent', with just over half (51 per cent) reporting this 'to a great extent'
- developing a sense of social justice: 92 per cent report this 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent', with just over half (50 per cent) reporting it 'to a great extent'
- raising participation in the democratic process: 92 per cent report this 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent', with just less than half (48 per cent) reporting it 'to a great extent'.

Teachers also strongly report, albeit to a lesser extent, that their schools' approach is characterised by the development of students' consumer awareness and enterprise skills. For example, this includes: developing informed consumers (77 per cent 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent'), equipping students to access public services (71 per cent 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent') and developing an entrepreneurial mindset in students (70 per cent 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent'). Although these findings suggest that schools are undertaking a wealth of activities, they are also indicative that schools' priorities generally tend to focus on theoretical considerations designed to support students'

264 conceptual understanding of citizenship and community rather than practical activities to
265 develop their skills and self-efficacy in engaging with communities.

266 This issue becomes particularly pronounced when considering opportunities for students to
267 engage in community issues outside of their immediate neighbourhood. Whilst 60 per cent
268 of teachers report 'to some extent' or 'to a great extent' that their school provides
269 opportunities for students to engage in community issues and activities within their
270 immediate neighbourhood, and an even greater proportion actively promote links with their
271 local communities, a considerable minority (35 per cent) report that their school only
272 provides opportunities outside of their immediate neighbourhood 'to a small extent'. This
273 suggests that there are fewer opportunities for engagement in community issues and
274 activities outside of students' own locality.

275 *Effectiveness of strategies to encourage students to volunteer*

276 Teachers report that their schools utilise both curricular and extra-curricular activities to
277 promote citizenship and community engagement amongst students. In general, activities
278 more commonly delivered as part of the curriculum tend to focus on the theoretical
279 considerations described above, for example: critical analysis of societal issues (in 72 per
280 cent of schools); understanding the idea of justice (74 per cent); understanding the idea of
281 democracy (66 per cent) and understanding the role of the media (75 per cent). By contrast,
282 the most commonly reported activities to be delivered through extra-curricular activities
283 tend to focus on practical activities such as volunteering. This includes both informal
284 volunteering (in 46 per cent of schools); and formal volunteering (in 34 per cent of schools).
285 These findings show that there is a clear distinction in the types of activities available to
286 students at different points throughout the school day. This is of potential concern when

287 one considers that students who are least proactive or inclined to participate in community
288 engagement more broadly are also likely to be those least likely to participate in extra-
289 curricular activities within their own school community. Likewise, we know that high
290 achieving and more socially confident students are those who are most likely to participate
291 in their communities. It therefore seems possible that many of the students who would
292 most benefit from practical support to develop their skills for community engagement are
293 not being appropriately targeted. This is of particular importance as there is limited
294 evidence that schools are providing opportunities for students to consolidate learning in the
295 classroom from volunteering (only 44 per cent of teachers report that this is the case).

296 Teachers report that the most common factors that motivate their students to volunteer or
297 take part in community activities include: contributing to a specific cause they are interested
298 in; improving their future job prospects; and developing new skills. It is therefore reasonable
299 to conclude that schools' strategies to support young people in pursuing volunteering
300 strategies should be tailored towards these aims. In many cases, however, whilst schools
301 appear broadly supportive of their students participating in volunteering activities (in almost
302 three-fifths (58 per cent) of cases frequently responding, for example, to local and national
303 campaigns to encourage volunteering by young people), there is limited evidence of schools
304 proactively seeking out opportunities for their students to volunteer in their local
305 communities. For example, approximately three-fifths (61 per cent) of participants report
306 that their schools do not undertake outreach activities with the community to identify
307 potential opportunities for students to volunteer; and almost two-thirds of participants (65
308 per cent) have no policies or systems in place to respond to opportunities provided by
309 organisations that directly approach their school. Furthermore, almost three-quarters of

310 participants (72 per cent) have no policies or systems in place to support students to
311 undertake volunteering opportunities they have identified themselves.

312 Participants report that students are least motivated to volunteer by the views of their
313 family and friends, and by increasing their sense of wellbeing. Teachers therefore appear to
314 perceive that the active role of families and peers in encouraging students to participate in
315 community activities requires further development. Whilst just over one-third (36 per cent)
316 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that students' families and peers actively encourage getting
317 involved in community issues and actions, over one-quarter (28 per cent) 'disagree' or
318 'strongly disagree'. It is of note, however, that teachers relatively rarely report (in 36 per
319 cent and 33 per cent of cases respectively) that their school involves parents in the delivery
320 of curriculum and after school activities, or produces community newsletters, delivered or
321 available in local shops, libraries, places of worship or cafes. It may, therefore, be beneficial
322 to explore further ways that schools and families can work more closely together to
323 promote community participation amongst their students.

324 *Provision of support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds*

325 The provision of targeted support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to
326 participate in community-based activities appears to be common in schools, with teachers
327 reporting that they utilise a wide range of strategies to achieve this aim. For example, the
328 majority (71 per cent) of teachers report 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent' that their
329 school supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in community
330 based activities by using mentors and role models from pupil's own community, with 36 per
331 cent reporting this 'to a great extent'. Also common, albeit to a slightly lesser degree, are
332 schools working with organisations with particular expertise in engaging disadvantaged

333 students (almost two-thirds (63 per cent) report 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent' that
334 their, with 28 per cent reporting this 'to a great extent'). Just over half (52 per cent) of
335 teachers report 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent' that their school subsidises transport
336 so that disadvantaged students can take part in community based activities. However, one-
337 fifth (20 per cent) report that their school does this 'not at all'.

338 Other specific activities include: participation in activities provided by external agencies;
339 targeted provision/additional or alternative curriculum for identified students; one-off
340 projects/activities for particular groups; working with young people alongside their families;
341 extended schools programmes and links to other schools and colleges; and provision of
342 additional funding for extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged students.

343 Whilst the majority of teachers report that their school is providing differentiated activities
344 to meet the needs of different groups of students (e.g. socio-economic groups, ethnicity,
345 gender) or targeting specific groups at risk of disengaging 'to some extent' or 'to a great
346 extent' (74 per cent and 73 per cent respectively), approximately one-fifth (22 per cent and
347 21 per cent respectively) report this only 'to a small extent'.

348 *Effectiveness and impact of strategies to develop community cohesion*

349 Teachers were asked about the effectiveness of their school-wide approach to develop
350 citizenship and community cohesion. Just under three-quarters (73 per cent) report that
351 their school is 'effective' or 'highly effective' in identifying what needs to be done to
352 promote community cohesion and citizenship, with 18 per cent reporting that their school is
353 'highly effective'.

354 Teachers report that their schools' approaches are broadly effective in supporting students
355 to engage with their communities. Almost all teachers (98 per cent) felt that their school
356 fosters a climate where students are willing to discuss difficult issues (66 per cent report this
357 'to a great extent' and 31 per cent 'to some extent'). The vast majority of teachers (93 per
358 cent) also felt that their school creates an environment where there is mutual respect and
359 trust among students and staff (72 per cent 'to a great extent' and 21 per cent 'to some
360 extent').

361 When asked about the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies they employ to
362 develop community cohesion, teachers report most strongly that their students *enjoy*
363 participating in community cohesion and citizenship activities: the vast majority (71 per
364 cent) report that this is the case for 'most' of their students, and a further four per cent
365 report that this was the case for 'all' of their students. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of
366 teachers also report that students find their involvement in community cohesion and
367 citizenship activities meaningful (and a further one per cent report that 'all' their students
368 find this meaningful). However, a substantial minority (nearly one-third, 32 per cent) report
369 that only 'some' of their students find this meaningful.

370 In general, teachers report strongly that their strategies for citizenship and community
371 engagement are having a positive impact on students. Teachers report strongly, for
372 example, that their students feel that their opinions and actions matter: the vast majority
373 (90 per cent) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that this was the case, with over one-third (35 per
374 cent) strongly agreeing. Likewise, over two-thirds of teachers (70 per cent) 'agree' or
375 'strongly agree' that their students are fully aware of the benefits of taking part in
376 community, with 18 per cent of these strongly agreeing.

377 Again, however, teachers report less strongly that their approaches are resulting in
378 students' developing the practical competencies to translate their knowledge into action.
379 Just over half of teachers (55 per cent) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that their students have
380 the knowledge, social networks and skills necessary for community action, and over one-
381 fifth of teachers (22 per cent) 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that this was the case.

382 **Conclusions**

383 The findings of this survey highlight the many ways in which schools are developing,
384 promoting and facilitating citizenship education and community cohesion. The results
385 suggest that students may simultaneously feel a sense of belonging to many different
386 communities, each requiring a distinct contribution. Equally, we understand that there are
387 differences between students in the ways that they interact with their communities, and in
388 the resulting support that schools need to offer if they are to support students effectively.

389 It is apparent that schools' priorities generally tend to focus on theoretical considerations
390 designed to support students' conceptual understanding of citizenship and community
391 rather than practical activities to develop their skills and self-efficacy in engaging with
392 communities. This is reflected in teachers' perceptions of impact, suggesting that students
393 are more effectively developing an appreciation of their roles as citizens than they are
394 practical skills to interact with their communities.

395 Whilst schools appear to have well developed strategies for supporting the specific needs of
396 students (for example, those from disadvantaged backgrounds), many of the activities which
397 emphasise this practical component of community engagement are delivered outside of
398 classroom, making it substantially more difficult for teachers to engage with students who

399 are less motivated to participate in extra-curricular activities. This is compounded by a lack
400 of opportunity to consolidate learning from extra-curricular activities in the classroom.

401 Whilst a conceptual level understanding is clearly critical to students' development and
402 awareness of their citizenship and community responsibilities, it seems that there is a need
403 for schools to offer more tailored offer students if they are to develop a more sophisticated
404 model of support to meet their wide-ranging needs, interests and identities.

405 Teachers perceive their schools to be highly effective in delivering citizenship and
406 community and community engagement activities. However, they also appear to recognise
407 that they face significant challenges in helping young people to understand and become
408 constructively engaged in their communities, particularly in relation to parental involvement
409 and community outreach activities. It is important to reiterate that this research represents
410 teachers' views on students' experiences of community involvement and citizenship
411 education. Therefore, this needs to be considered carefully when interpreting the results. It
412 may be the case that there is a disconnect in perceptions between teachers and young
413 people (see Davies et al, 2014) and additional research in this area is warranted.

414 It is apparent that there is potential for schools to develop their strategies for engaging with
415 families and wider stakeholders to promote community engagement. This suggests that it
416 may be valuable to explore further the connection between work in schools and the lives of
417 young people beyond school, in particular to counteract any disadvantage of deprivation or
418 socio-economic status.

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